Micro I-Deals: A Weekly Diary Study

Abstract

Informed by conservation of resources (COR) theory, this study explores the dynamic associations among coworker support, idiosyncratic deals (I-deals) and supervisor-rated in-role work performance. We utilized a weekly diary study design and collected multi-source, data from employees across five weeks. Our results confirmed the partial mediation of micro flexibility I-deals between perceived coworker support and supervisor-rated work performance, all measured at the week level. This research makes important contributions to the conceptualization, theory and measurement of I-deals.

Keywords: coworker support, I-deals, work performance, weekly design.

Scholarly interest in idiosyncratic deals (I-deals) has burgeoned over the past several years, as evidenced by the increased attention that I-deals have received in organizational journals (Anand, Vidyarthi, Liden, & Rousseau, 2010; Liao, Wayne, & Rousseau, 2014; Vidyarthi, Chaudhry, Anand, & Liden, 2014). There are several reasons for the increased importance of I-deals, defined as personalized agreements negotiated between a manager and an employee, which have sparked this research interest (Rousseau, 2001). For example, rising competition, pressure for innovation and decentralized work settings (Frese & Fay, 2001; Parker, 2000) encourage employees to manage their own careers proactively (Brisco & Hall, 2006). Employers also find it challenging to keep their competent employees loyal (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Interestingly, I-deals provide means to adapt to the changing workplace while also allowing employers to increase the loyalty of their competent employees. These deals are intended to meet specific work-related needs and preferences of a focal employee, which are different than job-related rights and responsibilities of coworkers (Rousseau, 2005; Rousseau, Ho, & Greenberg, 2006). I-deals are typically initiated by employees after hire in order to introduce new features into an on-going relationship; but they can also be negotiated before recruitment (Rousseau, 2005). Moreover, I-deals are usually geared towards developing work-related skills, competencies, obtaining professional developmental opportunities (i.e., developmental I-deals), and/or obtaining flexible working hours and schedules (i.e., flexibility I-deals; Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2009; 2008).

Research on the antecedents and consequences of I-deals has only recently taken off (Bal, De Jong, Jansen, & Bakker, 2012; Liao, Wayne, & Rousseau, 2014; Ng & Feldman, 2012). In terms of antecedents, studies have typically emphasized a high-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship as a driver of I-deals (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser, 2010; 2013). Additionally, prior research has shown that I-deals positively predict a wide range of employee attitudes and behaviors including employee commitment (Ng & Feldman,

2010), organizational citizenship behaviors directed at individuals (OCB-I) (Anand et al., 2010), proactive behaviors (Liu, Lee, Hui, Kwan, & Wu, 2013), and motivation to work after retirement (Bal et al., 2012).

Despite the growing literature on I-deals, researchers have solely focused on the role of the I-deal negotiator and have overlooked how other parties (e.g., coworkers) intervene in this process. Interestingly, however, I-deals theory suggests that these work arrangements influence involve everyone including coworkers who are excluded from these privileged agreements (Ng & Feldmna, 2010; Rousseau, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2006).

With those issues in mind, in the present research, we address these gaps in the literature and investigate an expanded network of I-deals using a multi-level and multi-source experimental study design. Building on conservation of resources (COR) theory (Halbesleben, Neveu, & Paustian-Underdahl, 2014; Hobfoll, 1988; 1998), we argue that coworker support represents a key relational resource (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2011; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2012) that relates to the obtainment of flexibility I-deals. In turn, we contend that I-dealers invest their resources and perform well.

This study advances previous research in three important ways. Our first contribution is that we highlight the importance of coworkers, as enablers of I-deals. Responding to recent calls for research regarding the influence of coworkers (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015; Liao et al., 2014), we show that I-deals do not occur in a dyadic vacuum (i.e., employee-supervisor); they are influenced by coworkers, whose work conditions need to be modified to accommodate I-deals (Greenberg et al., 2004; Hornung et al., 2009; 2008; Liu et al., 2013). As such, these unique work arrangements are likely to be viewed as privileges by coworkers (Rousseau, 2005; Rousseau et al., 2009), ultimately influencing the effectiveness of I-deals (Anand et al., 2010). Therefore, we show that coworker support prior to I-deals constitutes an

important reservoir of relational resources for the focal employee (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2012).

Our second contribution is that we show I-deals directly influence in-role work performance. Going beyond prior studies that primarily investigated attitudinal and discretionary outcomes (Hornung et al., 2010; Hornung et al., 2013; Ng & Feldman, 2010), we show that the benefits of I-deals positively predict in-role work performance, which is a more immediate behavioral consequence of I-deals (Liao et al,., 2014). Predominantly drawing from the resource reinvestment assumption of COR theory (Halbesleben, Harvey, & Bolino, 2009), we argue that I-dealers make further investments by showing enhanced work performance.

Finally, our measurement approach offers new insights both methodologically and theoretically. Particularly, we tested our hypotheses using a weekly diary design (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003) and with multi-source, lagged data collected from the focal employee, coworkers, and supervisors, all of which add to the rigor of our findings. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that employs a within-person approach concerning our research variables – particularly I-deals. Beyond our methodological contributions, we sought to explore whether I-deals change over weeks, which could be crucial to reveal the presence of "micro I-deals" and hence shape personalized human resources practices towards a more dynamic fashion. Our proposed research model is shown in Figure 1.

Theoretical Development

Predicting I-Deals: The Role of Coworker Support

As a relatively nascent stream of research, only a few studies have explored the antecedents of I-deals (e.g., Rosen et al., 2013) with most of this research focusing on LMX

(Hornung et al., 2010). Extending this line of research, we content that relational resources are crucial in exploring how the focal employee successfully obtains I-deals. We focus on coworker support as a relational resource. Coworker support refers to support that an employee can utilize when there is need. In structuring our arguments below, we utilize COR theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Halbesleben, 2006; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Hobfoll, 1988; 1998), and particularly the resource reinvestment tenet of COR theory (Halbesleben, Harvey, & Bolino, 2009; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; 2012).

I-deals theory emphasizes the mutually-beneficial nature of individualized work arrangements for everyone, including team-mates (Anand et al., 2010; Rousseau, 2005). However, due to I-deals of the focal employee, the working conditions of coworkers are now differentiated (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015). For instance, coworkers, who do not have similar privileges, may have to work harder than before to deal with the expected work load (Hornung et al., 2010). On these grounds, even if I-deals occur in a dyadic form of relationship (employee-supervisor), we argue that coworkers are important third parties (i.e., enablers) in these agreements.

The process of negotiating and obtaining I-deals is a risky and resource-draining endeavor because these negotiations often violate the standard human resource practices in team settings (Ng & Feldman, 2010; 2012). By definition, the focal employee is rewarded with unique work agreements that are different than what the majority of workers have (Anand et al., 2010). Moreover, I-deals involve implicit terms that are difficult to communicate in team settings (e.g., a raise in pay; Greenberg et al., 2004). Combining these reasons, it is highly likely that coworkers, who are crucial parties in influencing the social and work climate in teams (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Turner, Chmiel, Hershcovis, & Walls, 2010), might perceive these I-deals as favoritism (Greenberg et al., 2004). But if the focal

employee is valued and supported by coworkers, the potential negative effects of I-deals are likely to be minimal (Anand et al., 2010).

For instance, if the focal employee receives an I-deal during a certain week in the form of new project responsibilities, he or she can draw upon coworker support during that week to ensure that work is completed. Therefore, coworker support represents a significant resource that makes the focal employee feel secure while asking for I-deals. From the supervisor's perspective, authorizing I-deals to a valued and supported employee is likely to reduce the possible extra burden of work for the team (Hornung et al., 2009). As such, supervisors are likely to manage the consequences of these deals effectively in supportive team environments (e.g., re-balancing the work load among coworkers, communicating and justifying the focal employee`s I-deals to mates). Consistent with COR theory (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Halbesleben et al., 2009), we argue that focal employees can utilize coworker support as a relational resource (Halbesleben, 2006; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2012) in a manner to maximize his / her chances of obtaining I-deals (e.g., via justifying and / or legitimizing these I-deals to supervisors). Drawing from this line of thinking, we propose that coworker support represents a crucial reservoir of relational resources that positively predicts I-deals of a focal employee positively.

Hypothesis 1: Coworker support is positively associated with obtained developmental I-deals (all measured weekly).

I-Deals and Outcomes: Supervisor-Rated In-Role Work Performance

I-deals represent particularistic resources granted to a focal employee (Ng & Feldman, 2012). These resources are likely to be highly valued and preserved (Rousseau et al., 2009), because such I-deals signal the social standing, entitlement, and work performance of the focal employee (Hornung et al., 2013) compared to team-mates. However, beyond this sense

of reciprocity, the benefits arising from I-deals (e.g., training, skill development, job rotations and new responsibilities) are the real mechanisms that explain employee desirable behaviors and attitudes. Hence, the I-dealers are likely to feel motivated and perform better (Anand et al., 2010) not necessarily due to the feeling of reciprocity following successful I-deal negotiations but mainly due to the valuable resources obtained in this process (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015).

In establishing the proposed relationships between obtained I-deals and outcomes, we consider two points. The first point relates to the feeling of reciprocity following successful I-deal negotiations. Previous research predominantly built on the norm of reciprocity in explaining how successful I-deal negotiations predicted key behavioral and attitudinal outcomes (Blau, 1964; Liu et al., 2013). However, a recent meta-analysis on I-deals demonstrated that the predictive power of I-deals for employee outcomes is mediocre (Liao et al., 2014) and non-significant for cross-lagged studies (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015; Hornung et al., 2008). One potential reason for this is that research to date has built on the assumption that successfully negotiated I-deals are ultimately obtained. However, successfully negotiated I-deals might not be realized for a wide range of reasons. In this sense, we posit that it is crucial to differentiate between I-deal negotiations and obtained I-deals. Consistent with this idea, Conway and Coyle-Shapiro (2015) also argued that I-deals research needs to clearly define the mechanisms linking I-deals to expected outcomes.

The second point relates to the beneficial consequences of I-deals. We focus on in-role work performance (Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008) and in doing so; our aim is to go beyond prior research that has largely focused on attitudinal and discretionary outcomes. Attitudinal outcomes (such as commitment or work engagement) and discretionary outcomes (such as OCBs) are indicators frequently used to establish reciprocity within a social exchange framework and have been extensively researched in relation to I-deals (Anand et al.,

2010; Ng & Feldman, 2010). To date, only Hornung et al. (2013) investigated the more immediate performance implications of I-deals, focusing on the indirect relationship between developmental I-deal negotiations and work performance via job autonomy. It can be argued that investigating attitudes and discretionary behaviors is a somewhat indirect way of exploring the impact of I-deals on performance (Grant, Gino, & Hofmann, 2011; Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009). We focus instead on more proximal indicators of job performance, specifically in-role work performance. This outcome requires the I-dealer to make use of the tailored work arrangements they have negotiated for. By granting employees developmental I-deals, organizations may support the focal employee in learning new skills so that they become more functional in performing their tasks (Ng & Feldman, 2012).

We draw on the resource reinvestment side of COR theory (Gorgievski, Halbesleben, & Bakker, 2011). Accordingly, employees who obtain I-deals (skill development, training, career growth opportunities) are likely to invest effort in job performance to acquire further resources (Hobfoll, 2001; Salanova et al., 2010). In particular, I-dealers are expected to pool their gained resources in similar work-related domains (e.g., in-role task performance directed at the organization). These unique resources are expected to enhance in-role work performance because the benefits of I-deals facilitate getting the current job done through work-related training, development opportunities (Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007), and career-growth prospects. Hence, the I-dealer is likely to be attuned to his or her work context and deal with task-related problems in more effective ways (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Patel et al., 2013; Porath & Bateman, 2006), which represent high work performance. Building on the main tenet of COR theory – people need to invest resources in order to gain more – we argue that the recipients of I-deals are likely to invest these resources in performance related domains. Our second hypothesis is set out below.

Hypothesis 2: Obtained developmental I-deals are positively associated with supervisor-rated in-role work performance (all measured weekly).

Obtained I-Deals as Mediating Mechanisms

Thus far, our theoretical arguments emphasized the role of coworker support in predicting I-deals. In turn, we also argued that I-deals positively explain supervisor rated in-role work performance. Broadening these points, we propose that obtained I-deals are linking resources that carry over the positive effects of relational resources to work performance.

COR theory suggests that positive loops exist between resources (Hobfoll, 2011), which lead to gain cycles or spirals over time (Halbesleben, Harvey, & Bolino, 2009; Hobfoll, 2002; Salanova et al., 2010). Thus, employees are motivated to invest their current resources in order to gain further resources (termed resource investment; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). A growing body of studies emphasize the positive effects of resource gains (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2013; Demerouti, Geurts, & Kompier, 2004; Demerouti, Bakker, & Voydanoff, 2010; Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007; Westman, Etzion, & Chen, 2009; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). In a similar stream of research, in the context of inter-role enrichment, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) underlined two routes in explaining how positive spillovers might occur. These are affective and instrumental pathways. Adapting these arguments, positive coworker support represents a reservoir of relational resources to be used during I-deal negotiations. Having obtained this support, the focal employee is likely to feel positive and energized to succeed in the I-deals process (e.g., Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson & Kacmar, 2007). On the other hand, obtained I-deals constitute instrumental resources because the resources gained relate to self-growth and career development (Rousseau, 2005). In order to maximize their gains from these work-related resources, I-dealers are likely to invest them back in the workplace (Halbesleben & Wheeler,

2008; Hobfoll, 2001) by showing enhanced work performance. Integrating affective and instrumental pathways and heavily relying on gain cycles (i.e., resource re-investment) in the context of COR theory, we argue that relational resources obtained from coworkers (i.e., social support) indirectly and positively influence the focal employee's work performance via obtained I-deals (i.e., generating dynamic positive spillovers).

> *Hypothesis 3:* Obtained developmental I-deals mediate the relationship between coworker support and supervisor-rated in-role work performance (all measured weekly).

Method

Choice of Weekly Design

In the current research, we employed a multi-level, multi-source weekly diary design. We decided to implement a weekly study design mainly for two reasons (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003). First, prior research argued that I-deals are intermittent events, emphasizing that such work-related changes are likely to be observed in periods less than six months but more than on a daily bases (Hornung et al., 2010).

Participants and Procedure

We carried out our weekly diary study. Participants were from two growing consultancy companies in Istanbul, Turkey. I-deals are likely to appear among well-educated and highly marketable employees in these industries (Belkin, 2007; Capelli, 2000). Our sample consisted of 63 employees who were in direct contact with clients as parts of their jobs (e.g., they spend around half of each week at clients` locations). Twenty participants were human resource management consultants providing assessment services to clients, and 43 participants were software development employees who offered R & D consultancy to

clients. Prior to commencement of this study, the first author visited the general managers of these two companies and sought for permission of the study, in return for an executive summary of the results. All the participants were ensured of the full confidentiality and anonymity of the results. Of the 63 employees, 67 % were male. The average age was 32.5 (SD = 4.2). The average tenure in the company was 3.2 years (SD = 4.4).

We first translated the survey items into Turkish to ensure that responses are not biased by participants' level of English (Brislin, 1986). We then discussed the content of our wording and items with four full professors from relevant fields. Afterwards, we pre-tested this survey with twelve Turkish doctorate students. Following minor adjustments, we had our final survey back-translated by a professional translator, which is the recommended procedure to ensure face validity (Prieto, 1992). We collected data at the general ("trait") level, and at the week level. Before collecting weekly level data, we asked participants to fill out a general survey that included the control and trait level variables. Weekly surveys began one week after the initial survey. Following the suggestions of Halbesleben and colleagues (2014), we collected lagged data within each week. Particularly, at the beginning of each week corresponding to Mondays, team mates of the participants (N = 63; one coworker for each employee, selected by the team managers based on the criteria of having on-going collaboration with the focal employee) provided coworker support data only to the first author of the researcher in sealed envelopes. The focal employees were asked to complete the obtained I-deals data in the middle of the week, corresponding to Wednesdays. They had the possibility to fill out the surveys during their working time and return it through the post-boxes at their offices when they are not at the client sites. Performance data were obtained from the direct supervisors of the consultants every week (N = 46 supervisors working in the two consulting companies), who utilize this data as performance evaluation tools of the focal employees. We asked to receive this data specifically on Fridays in order to grasp an overall

view of the performance of these employees from the manager`s perspectives. Surveys from three different sources were provided to the first author in sealed envelopes and were later matched according to the names of the focal employees. The final data included responses from 63 consultants over an eight-week period ($N = 441$).

Measures

Unless otherwise indicated, all items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). At each data collection point, we asked our participants to think about the past week when completing the corresponding scale.

Weekly Measures

Coworker support ($\alpha = .92$). The three-item scale developed by Van Veldhoven and Meijman (1994) was used. This scale was employed in previous relevant research (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004). Team mates ($N = 63$; one coworker for each employee selected by the team manager) reported every week the degree to which they provided support to the focal employee during the previous week. One example item is "Last week, this employee could rely on me if he or she faced difficulties at work".

Obtained developmental I-Deals ($\alpha = .94$). We modified the I-deals scale developed by Rosen and colleagues (2013). In their study, they asked the degree to which the focal employees successfully negotiated work arrangements that were different than their coworkers. To measure the extent to which I-deals are obtained, we asked our participants to state the degree to which they acquired I-deals (vs. negotiations) that were different than what their coworkers already had. These eight items are developmental-focused. An example item is "Last week, I successfully obtained extra responsibilities that take advantage of my unique skills".

*In-role work performance (*α = .90). Supervisors from two consulting companies (*N* = 46) rated the performance of employees using a four-item scale developed by Gilboa and colleagues (2008). Items are intended to measure in-role performance in relation to pre-set standards of the job, expectations from managers, and in comparison to the performance of colleagues. An example item is "Last week, this employee's performance was consistently of high quality".

Control Measures

*Understanding of others' emotions (*α = .91). Research on I-deals revealed that people high on positive affectivity are likely to ask for and obtained individualized deals (e.g., Anand et al., 2010). To measure understanding of others' emotions, we utilized the four-item sub scale from emotional intelligence (all rated by the focal employee; WLEIS; Wong & Law, 2002). An example is "I am sensitive to the feelings and emotions of my coworkers".

*Regulation of one's emotions (*α = .90). To measure the extent to which one regulates his or her emotions, we utilized the four-item sub scale from emotional intelligence (all rated by the focal employee; WLEIS; Wong & Law, 2002). An example item is "I am quite capable of controlling my own emotions".

*Trait-level LMX Social Comparison (*α = .94). Prior research revealed that a high LMX relationship is an important predictor of I-deals. Going beyond this, we controlled for LMX social comparison, which evaluates the quality of supervisor-subordinate relationship in comparison to other team mates. Therefore, it offers a more rigorous and appropriate control variable. Employees self-rated their LMX in comparison to others via the six-item scale developed by Vidyarthi, Liden, Anand, Erdogan and Ghosh (2010). An example is "I have a better relationship with my manager than most others in my work group".

*Trait-level TMX (*α = .92). We also controlled for team-member exchange (TMX) relationship quality because in teams with higher TMX where there is support, employees might obtain I-deals easily. Similarly, in such contexts characterized by high quality relations, employees are likely to perform better. To control for such confounding effects, employees self-rated the ten-item scale developed by Seers (1989). An example is "I frequently take actions that make things easier for other members of my team".

Time and lagged behaviors. To control for time-serial dependence (auto-correlation), week was used as the time index. Similarly, in order to rule out the time trends of obtained I-deals and work performance as outcomes, lagged measures of each of these variables were included in the analyses. Demographic variables (age, gender, tenure in the company) did not make any significant difference in the analyses, hence they were excluded.

Analytical Strategy

We used multilevel analyses (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992) given that we had hierarchical data structure. Specifically, we had weeks nested in individual persons. At level 1, we had weeks as repeated measures (eight weeks but due to the use of lagged variables, we did not use the first week; $N = 441$ occasions) whereas at level 2, we had individual persons ($N = 63$). We used MlwiN software to test our proposed hypotheses (Rashbash, Browne, Healy, Cameron, & Charlton, 2000). We centered the control variables and trait-level emotional intelligence measures at grand mean, and we centered the week level measures at the respective person mean (Ohly, Sonnentag, Niessen, & Zapf, 2010). We followed a staged approach to build an equation for our dependent variable. First, we created an intercept-only model, after which control and independent variables were added in separate models. For our mediation hypothesis, consistent with recent research (Johnson, Lanaj, & Barnes, 2014; Preacher & Selig, 2012), we conducted Monte Carlo Markov Chain (MCMC) simulations

with 20,000 iterations to obtain confidence intervals around our proposed indirect effects. When the confidence intervals do not contain zero, it means that a significant indirect effect is established.

To examine the variation that could be attributed to different levels of analyses, we calculated the intra-class correlations for each variable. Results revealed that 53 % and 34 % of variance in obtained I-deals and coworker support, respectively, can be attributed to weekly variations. Additionally, 28 % of variance in performance is due to weekly variations, supporting the use of multi-level analyses.

Results

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations and correlations among all the study variables.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that at weeks when coworker support is high, obtained I-deals would be high as well. Our findings supported this hypothesis ($\gamma = .274$, $p < .01$). Hypothesis 2 anticipated a positive association between obtained I-deals and supervisor-rated in-role work performance. Results confirmed this hypothesis ($\gamma = .274$, $p < .01$). Further details are provided in Table 2 for hypothesis 1 and Table 3 for hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that coworker supported would be associated with supervisor-rated in-role work performance via the mediation of obtained developmental I-deals. Results of the MCMC analysis confirmed the indirect effects of obtained I-deals between coworker support and supervisor-rated in-role work performance (95% CI = [0.024 / 0.982]). Please see Table 4 for the results of γ values used in testing the mediation.

Discussion

In the present research, we explored and expanded the nomological net of I-deals, primarily by building on COR theory (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll, 1989). We showed

that coworker support matters to obtain I-deals, which are then transferred to enhanced in-role work performance. Below, we discuss our theoretical contributions specifically for I-deals and for COR theory in general.

"Micro" and Dynamic I-Deals at the Workplace

We make an important contribution to I-deals theory and research by showing that I-deals are dynamic and vary from week to week. In fact, our findings revealed that I-deals do not have to involve substantial changes to one's work conditions yet they still matter in driving employee work performance (i.e, micro I-deals). Therefore, our within-person variation of I-deals (53%) is crucial and moves beyond previous research that utilized static between-person approaches when defining and examining I-deals (Hornung et al., 2010; Rousseau et al., 2009). Dynamism and turbulence characterize today's business settings. Echoing this situation, the fact that employees might gain individualized work arrangements in relatively short time intervals (over weeks) shows that HRM strategies might benefit from more flexibilities and might also change dynamically, without having drastic contractual costs. Previous research suggests that employees may only negotiate I-deals either before (ex-ante) or after recruitment (ex-post; Rousseau, 2005). This view promotes I-deals as rather static implementations and hence might inhibit their effective use within organizations. Ng and Feldman (2012) argued that employers are likely to use I-deals as strategies to attract and keep talented employees with them over time. Building on this suggestion, it is conceivable to use I-deals in incremental ways (e.g., via providing more flexibility in how a task is done; adding new responsibilities to an existing task) that build up employee morale and maneuver his or her career within the same organization. Within-person variance of I-deals might also suggest that such arrangements are more effective compared to more rigid and structured work agreements (e.g., Jiang et al., 2012).

As a second contribution, we framed I-deals as obtained resources and hence moved its theory beyond the commonly explored norm of reciprocity (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015). Prior research yielded inconsistent results regarding the relationship between I-deals and employee outcomes (Liao et al., 2014). This is most likely due to the cross-sectional nature of previous studies (Hornung et al., 2010) and the conceptualization of "negotiated I-deals". In support of this, recently, researchers argued that reciprocation for successful negotiations is not likely to last in the long run (e.g., Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2015; Conway & Briner, 2005). Responding to these calls, we evaluated obtained I-deals (versus negotiated I-deals) as resources (Hobfoll, 1988) and showed that it is the obtained I-deals that predict desirable employee outcomes. In this respect, our novel conceptualization of obtained I-deals, along with its measurement sheds a new light on this construct.

Moreover, we showed that even if I-deals occur within a dyadic form of relationship, their effects are observed in a wider work context. Most prior research claimed that coworkers are important enablers of I-deals (Anand et al., 2010; Bal et al., 2012), but these studies did not explore how coworkers influence this process. Clarifying this argument, our results revealed that even after focal employees obtain I-deals over weeks, coworkers are still supportive and hence instrumental in an I-deals process. Studies on unit climate (e.g., Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) and on coworker effects (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008) reveal similar results, confirming the positive effects of supportive and developmental work contexts on employee outcomes.

To further expand our understanding on the consequences of I-deals, we explored supervisor-rated in-role work performance (Gilboa et al., 2008) hence moving the prior research beyond a point where focus has been on employee and/ or organizational driven outcomes (Ng & Feldman, 2010). Our findings demonstrated that employees re-invest their obtained I-deals by displaying enhanced work performance. This result helps rethinking and

broadening the assumption of I-deals theory – that providing personalized work arrangements benefit everyone through contributing to work performance (Rousseau, 2005).

Practical Implications

Our research carries crucial practical implications. According to our findings, flexibility in how one completes his / her job (72%) and opportunities to take on outside formal job requirements (67%) had the highest variation across weeks. Closing such micro I-deals echo the study of Jian and colleagues (2012), who indicated that skill and opportunity enhancing HR practices were most significantly related to key financial outcomes within an organization. On these accounts, managerial decisions such as work designs involving more flexibility may be promoted as I-deals to improve employee performance. Additionally, our result that I-deals are dynamic emphasizes the crucial role of these agreements to help develop the focal employee's career trajectory within a same organization. Moreover, because I-deals are beyond the standardized human resources practices, their execution deserves attention not only from supervisors but also from HR units. As such, HR units and supervisors might work in collaboration to establish motivation-driving I-deal systems uniquely designed for everyone. Overall, employers might utilize I-deals as individualized HR strategies not only to attract talented employees but also to keep them committed and flourishing (Ng & Feldman, 2012).

The findings from our study might also be useful for managers who try to understand coworker interactions (Chiaburu & Harriso, 2008). By its definition, the provision of I-deals to a focal employee excludes others from the same privileges. In the current research, we showed that supportive work climate in the form of coworker support positively influenced I-deals of a focal employee. Supervisors as well as HR units might reinforce a resourceful environment via establishing clear and fair procedures for I-deals (Greenberg et al., 2004). The fact that coworker support predicted the I-deals of the focal employee implies that

helping behavior should be formally and informally encouraged (Halbesleben, & Wheeler, in press; Lau & Liden, 2008).

Limitations and Further Research Suggestions

Despite the strengths of this research, we faced certain limitations. A first limitation concerns our focus on developmental I-deals. Given the career and capability-growth oriented nature of developmental I-deals, we deemed it appropriate to ground our research on this specific type of work arrangement. However, it might be equally plausible to argue that flexibility I-deals (e.g., location and flexibility I-deals) yield similar trends of weekly variance and effects. Further research might integrate both of these I-deals and seek to explore whether they have unique effects.

Second, participants of this study were young, educated consultants. It is conceivable to argue that they are in a good position (e.g., job-related knowledge, self-confidence, and position power; Rousseau, 2005) to obtain I-deals. Future studies are needed to test the antecedents and consequences of I-deals drawing from broader samples.

Third, we heavily built on the resource re-investment (Halbesleben et al., 2014) tenet of COR theory when framing our overall research. While our research design (i.e., day lags between IV-M-DVs in a weekly diary design framework) fits well with our hypotheses and the dynamic nature of COR theory (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2011), most recent advancements in COR-based studies point at the possibility of using latent change score modeling or latent growth modeling methods (e.g., Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2012). Further studies might utilize these methodological approaches to expand our understanding on our research variables.

Lastly, we carried out this study in a Turkish business setting, which is predominantly characterized by a paternalistic leadership orientation (Aycan, Shyncs, Sun, Felfe, & Saher, 2013). Paternalism represents a dyadic relationship where supervisors treat their subordinates

in motherly or fatherly manners. Hence, in these work environments, employees are likely to have better chances of obtaining I-deals. Future research might elaborate effects of different types of leadership in different cultures.

Conclusive Remarks

Adopting a multi-source and lagged weekly diary design and via building on the notions of resource acquisition and resource investment from COR theory, we offered evidence for a model of positive gain cycles of I-deals. In an era where meeting employee expectations has become a major challenge for most companies (Inkson & King, 2011), we hope to ignite more research to further delineate the role of I-deals in modern organizational life.

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Table 1

Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and inter-correlations between the model variables

	M	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*
1. Coworker support	3.62	.68	(.92)										
2. Obtained developmental I-deals	4.10	.69	.35***	(.94)									
3. Supervisor-rated in-role work performance	3.61	.74	.32***	.17**	(.90)								
4. Understanding of others` emotions	3.75	.96	.02	(.25)**	.02	(.91)							
5. Regulation of one`s own emotions	3.56	.95	.03	.04	(.13)**	.51***	(.90)						
6. LMX Social Comparison	3.71	.81	.08*	.13**	.16**	.30***	.30***	(.94)					
7. TMX	3.54	1.03	.10*	.04	.01	.25***	.33***	.26**	(.92)				
8. Time - Weeks -	4.51	2.29	.20**	.26**	.26**	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.			
9. Lagged I-deals	3.45	.69	.15**	.53***	.07*	.06*	.08*	.09*	.12**	.15**	n.a.		
10. Lagged coworker support	3.78	.72	.47***	.32***	.24**	.09**	.03	.05	.10*	.18**	.22**	n.a.	
11. Lagged in-role work performance	3.72	.71	.24**	.12**	.36***	.02	.03	.21**	.03	.19**	.19**	.48***	n.a.

Notes: Lagged outcomes refer to the calculation of the prior-week outcomes of the focal employee. Reliabilities are shown along the diagonal in parentheses.

N = 441 occasions (7 weeks nested in 63 employees; we did not use the first week due to the use of lagged variables).

*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Multilevel estimates for models predicting obtained developmental I-deals

	Null model			*Model 1*			*Model 2*			*Model 3*		
Variables	*Estimate*	*SE*	*T*	*Estimate*	*SE*	*t*	*Estimate*	*SE*	*t*	*Estimate*	*SE*	*T*
Intercept	3.842	0.064	60.031	3.796	0.062	63.281	3.816	0.058	65.793	3.823	0.063	60.682
LMX social comparison				0.069	0.051	1.352*	0.057	0.078	0.731	0.013	0.076	0.171
TMX				0.098	0.062	1.58*	0.124	0.063	1.968*	0.124	0.063	1.968*
Time				0.083	0.009	9.222***	0.067	0.008	8.375***	0.072	0.008	9.000***
Lagged DI				0.064	0.031	2.064**	0.053	0.036	1.472*	0.061	0.035	1.743*
Coworker support							0.274	0.036	7.611***	0.245	0.034	7.206***
Understanding of others` emotions							(0.292)	0.073	4.000***	(0.297)	0.073	4.068***
Regulation of one`s emotions							0.073	0.077	0.948	0.088	0.077	1.143
Coworker support * understanding others` emotions										0.184	0.045	4.089***
Coworker support * regulation of one`s own emotions										0.132	0.042	3.143***
−2 × Log (l h)		818.815		731.085			661.462			643.054		
Difference of−2 × Log				87.730***			69.623***			18.408***		
Df				4			3			2		
Level 1 intercept variance (SE)		.254 (.051)		.248 (.049)			.212 (.041)			.213 (.041)		
Level 2 intercept variance (SE)		.223 (.015)		.184 (.012)			.161(.011)			.154 (.010)		

Notes: $N = 441$ occasions (7 weeks nested in 63 employees; we did not use the first week due to the use of lagged variables).
*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3
Multilevel estimates for models predicting supervisor-rated in-role work performance

	Null model			*Model 1*			*Model 2*			*Model 3*		
Variables	*Estimate*	*SE*	*t*	*Estimate*	*SE*	*t*	*Estimate*	*SE*	*t*	*Estimate*	*SE*	*T*
Intercept	3.726	.050	74.115	3.752	0.059	69.532	3.736	0.046	81.217	3.727	0.046	81.021
LMX social comparison				0.174	0.062	2.806***	0.221	0.060	3.681***	0.222	0.060	3.70***
TMX				0.011	0.050	0.22	0.030	0.048	.625	0.029	0.048	0.604
Time				0.102	0.011	9.273***	0.081	0.012	6.751***	0.080	0.012	6.666***
Lagged supervisor-rated in-role work performance				0.029	0.042	0.698	0.014	0.041	0.341	0.017	0.041	0.414
Obtained developmental I-deals							0.274	0.059	4.644***	0.286	0.059	4.847***
Understanding of others` emotions							0.019	0.057	0.333	0.021	0.057	0.368
Regulation of one`s emotions							(0.178)	0.058	3.068***	(.181)	0.059	3.067***
Obtained developmental I-deals * understanding of others` emotions										0.020	0.067	0.298
Obtained developmental I-deals * regulation of one`s own emotions										0.130	0.066	1.966**
−2 × Log (l h)	998.123			905.657			874.634			865.052		
Difference of−2 × Log				92.516***			30.973**			9.582**		
Df				4			3			2		
Level 1 intercept variance (SE)	.129 (.028)			.134 (.034)			.143 (.028)			.096 (.024)		
Level 2 intercept variance (SE)	.296 (.034)			.312 (.015)			.301(.022)			.280 (.019)		

Notes: $N = 441$ occasions (7 weeks nested in 63 employees; we did not use the first week due to the use of lagged variables).
*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4
Multilevel estimates for models predicting the mediation of obtained I-deals

	Obtained developmental I-deals			*Supervisor-rated in-role work performance*			*Supervisor-rated in-role work performance*		
	Model 1			*Model 2*			*Model 3*		
Variables	*Estimate*	*SE*	*T*	*Estimate*	*SE*	*t*	*Estimate*	*SE*	*t*
Intercept	3.796	0.062	63.281	3.726	0.054	69. 213	3.726	0.050	74.520
LMX social comparison	0.069	0.051	1.352*	0.171	0.062	2.758***	0.170	0.062	2.741***
TMX	0.098	0.062	1.58*	0.011	0.050	0.222	0.009	0.050	0.150
Time	0.083	0.094	0.882	0.092	0.011	8. 363***	0.078	0.012	6.501***
Lagged obtained developmental I-deals	0.083	0.009	9.222***						
Coworker support	0.274	0.036	7.611***	0.200	0.048	4.166 ***	0.141	0.050	2.820***
Lagged supervisor-rated in-role work performance				0.028	0.042	0.666	0.024	0.041	0.585
Obtained developmental I-deals							0.216	0.062	3.483**
−2 × Log (l h)	679.153			888.464			876.501		
Difference of−2 × Log	139.662***			109.659***			11.963***		
Df	5			5			1		
Level 1 intercept variance (SE)	.248 (.049)			.121 (.028)			.121 (.028)		
Level 2 intercept variance (SE)	.184 (.012)			.285 (.019)			.277 (.019)		

Notes: The Null −2 × Log (l h) value for Model 1 is = 818.815. The Null −2 × Log (l h) value for Model 2 is = 998.123.
N = 441 occasions (7 weeks nested in 63 employees; we did not use the first week due to the use of lagged variables).
*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 1

Proposed Model